

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2010

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2006

Introduced by Assembly Member Hill

February 17, 2010

An act to add ~~Section 6220 to~~ and repeal Section 6220 of the Government Code, relating to governmental linguistics.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2006, as amended, Hill. Governmental linguistics.

Existing law requires each department, commission, office, and other administrative agency of state government to use plain, straightforward language in a state agency document.

This bill would until January 1, 2015, require the California Research Bureau to survey state agency documents to determine the extent to which existing documents use language that suggests a particular religious faith or sect. This bill would also require the bureau to consult with experts to identify religiously neutral and inclusive terms to replace existing language and to identify any legal or fiscal ramifications, as specified. This bill would require the bureau to submit a report based on its findings to the Chief Clerk of the Assembly, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Judiciary Committees of the Assembly and Senate.

~~This bill would require a state agency document to neutrally phrase a reference to a religious institution and prohibit referencing an institution of a particular religious faith, unless the context requires otherwise.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. Section 6220 is added to the Government Code,*
2 *to read:*

3 6220. (a) *The Legislature finds and declares the following:*

4 (1) *In order to appropriately reflect the religious diversity of*
5 *our state, all official state documents that are intended for public*
6 *use and refer to a religious institution should, to the extent possible,*
7 *use language that is religiously neutral and inclusive.*

8 (2) *When referring to religious institutions in existing state*
9 *documents, words or phrases that are historically associated with*
10 *a particular religious faith are used too often. For example, the*
11 *use of the word “church” instead of more neutral terms such as*
12 *“congregation” or “place of worship.”*

13 (3) *The use of religiously biased language in official state*
14 *documents, however subtle or unintentional, is inconsistent with*
15 *the state’s commitment to religious diversity and inclusiveness, as*
16 *well as the state constitutional mandate to show no preference for*
17 *one religious faith over another.*

18 (b) (1) *The California Research Bureau shall survey state*
19 *agency documents that refer to religious institutions to determine*
20 *the extent to which existing documents use language that suggests*
21 *a particular religious faith or sect. The bureau shall also consult*
22 *with experts from the appropriate fields to do all of the following:*

23 (A) *Identify religiously neutral and inclusive terms that can be*
24 *used to replace religiously biased language in state agency*
25 *documents.*

26 (B) *Identify the legal ramifications, if any, of replacing*
27 *religiously biased language in state agency documents with*
28 *religiously neutral and inclusive terms.*

29 (C) *Identify the fiscal and budgetary ramifications of requiring*
30 *state government entities to review future agency documents to*
31 *ensure that religiously neutral and inclusive language is used.*

32 (2) *The California Research Bureau shall submit a brief report*
33 *based on its findings to the Chief Clerk of the Assembly, the*
34 *Secretary of the Senate, and the Judiciary Committees of the*
35 *Assembly and Senate on or before December 31, 2011. The report*
36 *shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795.*

37 (3) *Pursuant to Section 10231.5, this section is repealed on*
38 *January 1, 2015.*

1 ~~SECTION 1. Section 6220 is added to the Government Code,~~
2 ~~to read:~~

3 ~~6220. (a) When a department, commission, office, or other~~
4 ~~administrative agency of state government writes a state agency~~
5 ~~document, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 6219, in which~~
6 ~~a reference is made to a religious institution, the document shall~~
7 ~~be phrased in neutral language, and shall not specifically refer to~~
8 ~~an institution of a particular religious faith, unless the context~~
9 ~~requires otherwise.~~

10 ~~(b) A department, commission, office, or other administrative~~
11 ~~agency of state government shall comply with the requirements~~
12 ~~of subdivision (a) with each new version of a state agency~~
13 ~~document. Nothing in this section shall require reprinting of a state~~
14 ~~agency document.~~